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MAKE FAMILY TIME ACTIVE TIME

January is family fit month so Make Family Time Active Time! This campaign promoted by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, encourages children to be physically active for 60 minutes each day. Children of previous generations would have never heard such advice, we spent our lives outside. Today kids spend their time inside in front of a screen….television, video games, and computers. This increase in screen time correlates to the increase in child obesity.

Families have to make a deliberate effort to make physical activity a priority. One way is to join a gym, so I consulted Frederick County native Dan Strayton, owner of Health Unlimited in Mt. Airy, Maryland. Health Unlimited has been voted the number one fitness center in Frederick County by the Frederick Gazette. Dan, who holds a master’s degree in exercise physiology, started the center in 2001, as a family business. “Growing up in Mt. Airy, he has enjoyed the opportunity to bring a family-oriented fitness and aquatic center to the area.” One question into our interview it became clear to me that he is passionate about his profession.

According to Dan, “The main determinant if a person keeps up with their exercise program is spousal and family support. By offering activities for all family members it makes it easier for everyone to exercise. For instance Mom can take an aerobics class and Dad can hit the treadmill, while the kids play games in “The Yard,” and the little ones play in the “Tumble room.” These new phrases – The Yard and The Tumble Room – are exclusive to the facility to designate special areas for kids to get fit with other kids thus increasing the fun exponentially.

I asked Dan if more families were joining the center and he enthusiastically replied, “Yes and this encourages children to have a lifetime of healthy habits. The parents are setting an example that exercise is important and thus the kids think it’s just a normal part of life. When these kids become adults then they naturally join a fitness club and continue to make exercise a regular part of living.”

Health Unlimited provides a vast array of activities, so that everyone is sure to find something they enjoy.

- Aquatic center – swim lessons, scuba classes, swim team, open swim, lap swimming, and aquatic exercise classes.
• Group fitness classes – body pump, cycling, kickboxing, Pilates, salsa spin, tae bo turbo, yoga, zumba, and others. There are 78 to choose from in a given week and the choices continually change.
• Circuit room and nautilus equipment
• Stationary equipment – treadmills, bikes, elliptical, etc.

There are activities for homeschool kids, birthday parties, adult basketball and volleyball leagues, and much more.

For those seeking specialized training they have certified personal trainers. Registered Dietitian, Jen Baclawski, RD, provides nutritional counseling and shares two of her favorite recipes. See you at the gym!

MANDARIN CHICKEN SALAD (Serves 1)

2 1/2 cups mixed greens
3 ounce grilled chicken breast
1 tablespoon sliced almonds
1 tablespoon dried cranberries
1/4 cup mandarin oranges
1 tablespoon low-fat Feta cheese
2 tablespoons low-fat raspberry vinaigrette

Arrange chicken, almonds, cranberries, oranges and feta on top of mixed greens. Drizzle raspberry vinaigrette over salad.

SOUTHWEST SALAD (Serves six)

1 small tomato, chopped
1 red bell pepper, chopped
1 can corn, drained and rinsed
1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
2 tablespoons cilantro
1 lime
1 teaspoon salt
3 chicken breasts; sliced and cooked
2 tablespoons reduced sodium taco mix
Romaine lettuce
Light ranch dressing

Mix together tomato, red pepper, corn, black beans and cilantro. Cut lime and squeeze juice onto corn mixture. Add salt. Toss all ingredients together and set aside.
Slice three chicken breasts and sauté until well done. Add 2 tablespoons of reduced sodium taco mix to chicken and stir until well coated.

To arrange salads individually: 2 cups of romaine lettuce, 1/3 cup Corn/Bean Salsa, 3 ounces grilled chicken breast and 2 tablespoons light ranch dressing.

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